

‘DON’T PUT ME IN A BOX’

*Social construction of whiteness,
migrant’s narrative on identity
discourse & rise of populism: Grand
challenges for social work.*

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KEY FOCUS

1. 'Othering' & Building of walls
2. Social Construction of Whiteness & the Media
3. Rise of Populism, 'us and them' discourse and human rights.
4. Grand Challenges for Social Work & Response





USE OF LANGUAGE: 'US AND THEM'



IMMIGRANT

- A person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country.
- Carries negative connotations, includes 'foreign worker', 'migrant'
- Those less privilege and mostly the 'other' (BBC, 2018,
- **What makes one person an expat and the other an immigrant, foreign worker, migrant?**

EXPATRIATE

- A person who lives outside their native country
- Carries positive, preconceptions and assumptions about class, education and privilege, and 'being white'
- Associated with westerners settling in other countries. (BBC, 2018)



OTHERING: HISTORY



1. A 'need to keep the empire intact' triggered *Hadrian's Wall* in AD 112
2. Mission was to separate the Romans from '*Barbarians*'.
3. 2000 years on UK mirrors this nationalistic legacy- keeping the 'other' out- as part of immigration policy, legislation, rhetoric/sentiment & current western discourse. (Malik, 2018; Lang,

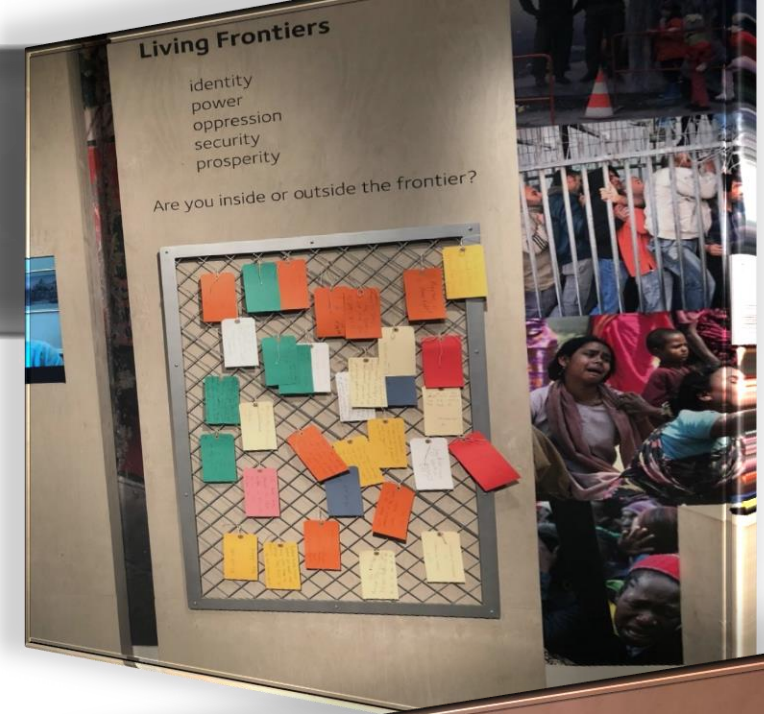
OTHERING: HISTORY



48 years ago after Enoch Powell's speech



Berlin Wall



Tullie House
Museum and
Art Gallery
Carlisle

If building a wall
secures freedom,
who is really free?

Graffiti on the Belfast Wall

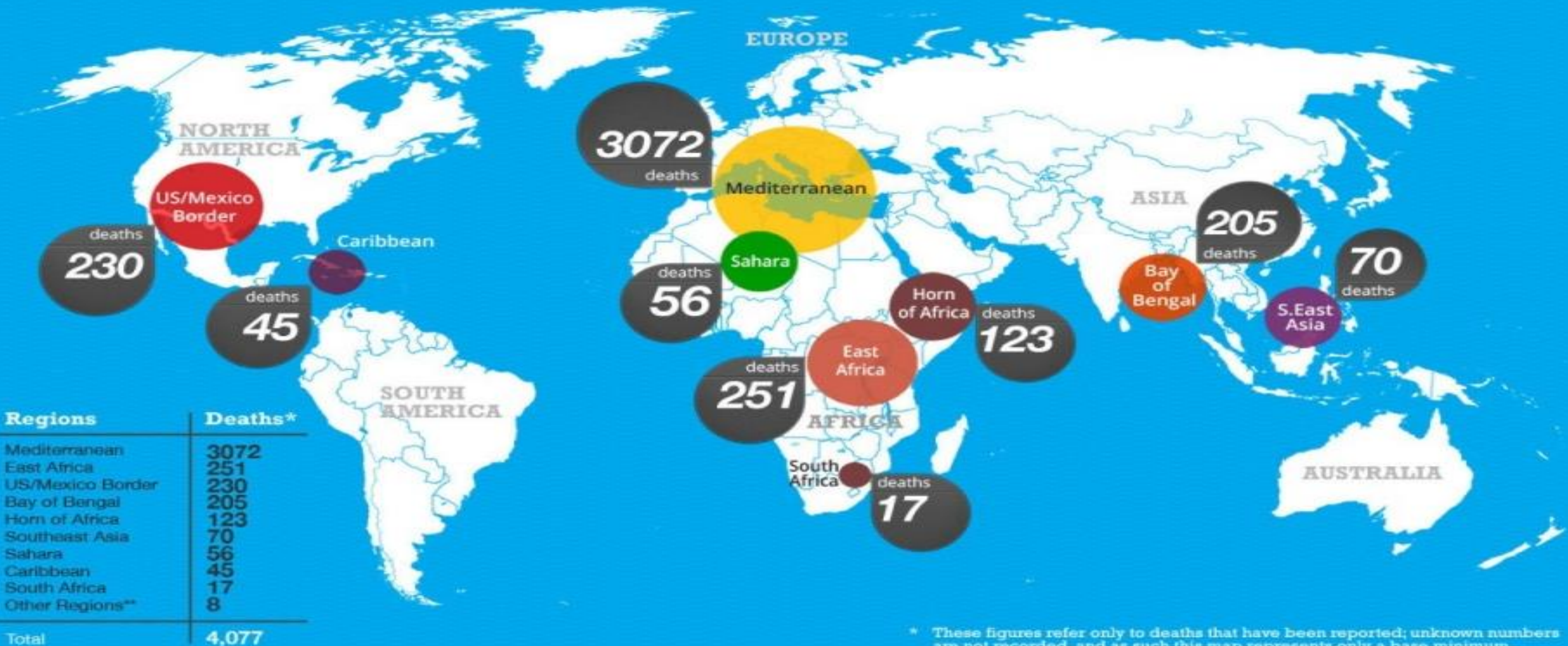
BUILDING WALLS- 'US AND THEM'



1. More walls have been built worldwide since 9/11/2001.
2. Countries are both walling themselves in and walling *undesirables* out.
3. **Focus:** Illegal immigration and terrorism
(Valle & David, 2012)

THE MISSING MIGRANTS PROJECT

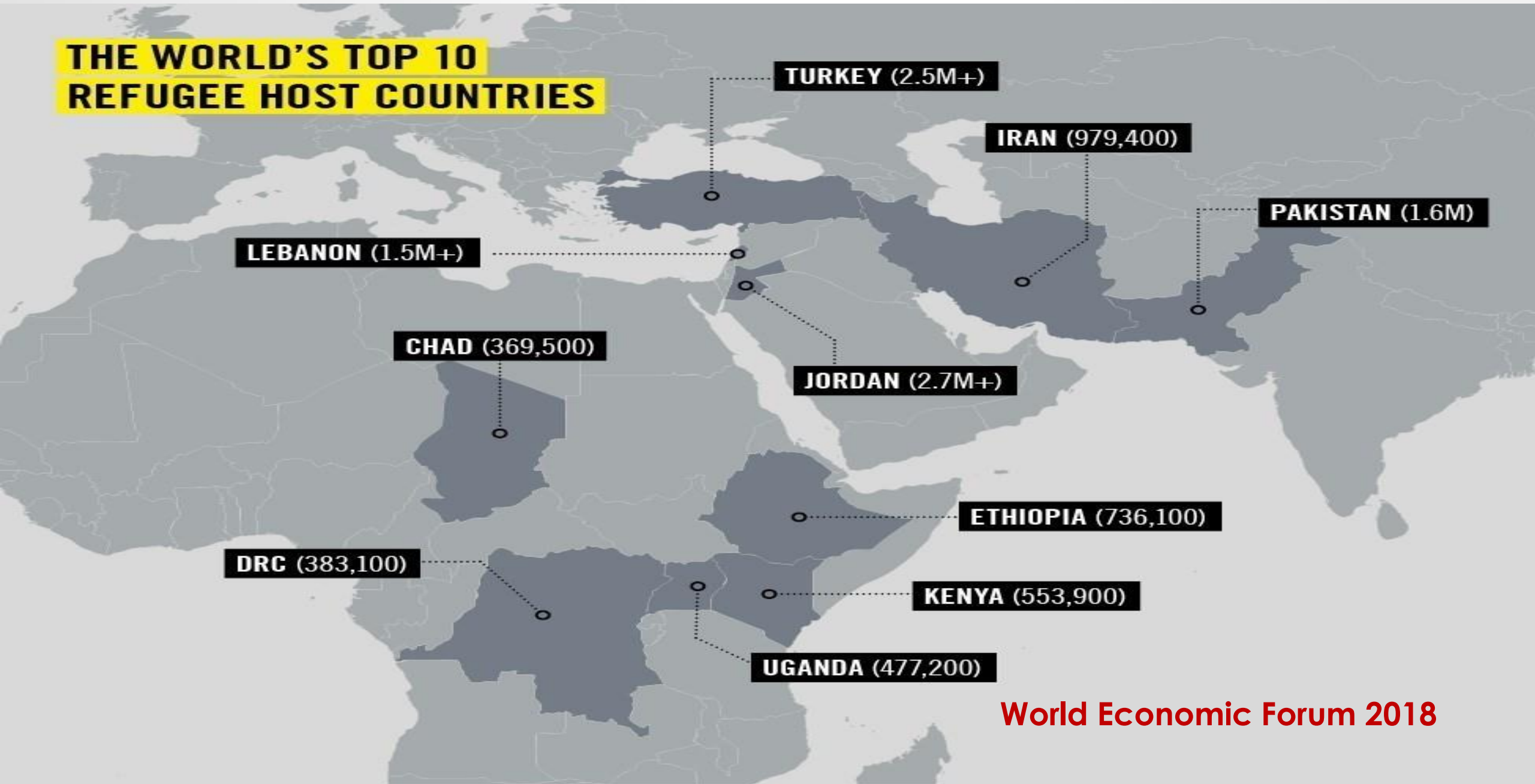
Migrant Deaths on World Borders, Jan-Sept 2014



* These figures refer only to deaths that have been reported; unknown numbers are not recorded, and as such this map represents only a base minimum.

** This refers to deaths that occurred in Europe other than the Mediterranean (7) and India (1). Although deaths are occurring in Central America, non-disaggregated data makes it difficult to isolate migration-related deaths.

THE WORLD'S TOP 10 REFUGEE HOST COUNTRIES



World Economic Forum 2018

THE MEDIA, 'OTHERING' & LANGUAGE



IMPACT OF 'OTHERING'



When societies experience big and rapid change, a frequent response is to:

1. Narrowly define who qualifies as a full member of society
 2. 'Othering' while showing today's power structures and dehumanise groups
 3. Reshape government, institutions and our society
- Othering is largely driven by politicians and the media, as opposed to personal contact.
 - Overwhelmingly, people don't "know" those that they are Othering.

(Powell, 2017: The Guardian 8 November 2017)

EDITH LEWIS- SENIOR LECTURER



DE-HUMANIZATION VS HUMAN RIGHTS

1. Use of language that degrades & de-humanizes migrants & contributing to moral panic.
2. The media questioning their status as human beings and seen as a threat.
3. Subtly suggesting they have not risen above their

animal origins -sentiments with colonial language-
savages. (Wilson-Hunt, 2018; Virdee & McGeever, 2017)

'invasion'

DE-HUMANIZATION VS HUMAN RIGHTS

4. The effectiveness of the press's representation of immigrants as threatening, as invasive **creatures**, is increased by the general uncertainty over the contextual and legal status of *immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees*. (Wilson- Hunt, 2018; Tanyas, 2016)

'criminals'
'rapists'

How do we change this discourse as social workers?

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS-MEDIA



1. The narrative remain unchallenged and becomes normalised by politicians using similar language. e.g. Brexit Campaign & D. Trump -USA
2. Coverage of immigration negative dominated by discourse that immigrants undermine British culture/values.
3. Negative rhetoric constructing a binary opposition.
4. Migrants seen as ***immoral invaders, criminals*** **versus** the lawful, hardworking and innocent British host society.

(Wilson-Hunt, 2018; Virdee & McGeever, 2017; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992; Langlands, 1999 cited in Tanyas,)

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS

1. The notion of superiority of other races e.g. Whiteness signifies 'race less' normalised identities against which black or other identities are 'othered' (Frankenberg, 1993, cited in Dowling & Flintoff, 2015, p3)
2. Whiteness tends to focus on the inadequacies of 'other' or focus on the race relations between 'us and them' rather than examining whiteness as a system of privilege & different multiple identities. (Dowling & Flintoff, 2015; Lewis, 2013)



RISE OF POPULISM: EXAMPLES



Independent- Friday 25 August 2017

Damning report accuses Government of stoking anti-immigrant sentiment as hate crime rises

'Rather than defusing public concerns regarding demographic and cultural change, officials have unnecessarily stoked anxiety over immigration and encouraged the growth of populist anti-immigrant sentiment,' cross-party group of MPs say.. (All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration, 2017) [Rise of populism in Europe](#)

GRAND CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL WORK

1. Ensure healthy development for all youth-**1**
2. Advance long and productive lives-**4**
3. Eradicate social isolation-**5**
4. End Homelessness-**6**
5. **Create social responses to a changing environment-7**
6. **Reduce extreme economic inequality-10**
7. **Build financial capability for all-11**
8. **Achieve equal opportunity and justice- 12**



HUMAN RIGHTS & SOCIAL WORK

1. **'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.'** UNHR Article. 1
2. The denial of migrants' rights is often closely linked to discriminatory laws and to deep-seated attitudes of prejudice or xenophobia.

(United Nations Human Rights, 2018)



CONCLUSION

1. How do we as social workers influence society with our values when the very people we want to help are stigmatized, de-humanised and seen as less equal or less than humans.
2. How do we engage and challenge the same media to restore social justice and change the discourse and rhetoric?
3. How to we demand politicians to respond to real issues e.g. impact of neoliberalism, poverty, housing, foreign policy which leads to displacement in the 1st place?

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